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Leading Sustainability Partnerships

A Case Study about Coty

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Abstract

The responsibility to battle today's environmental and social challenges is increasingly shifting from public institutions to the private sector. In order to assume this responsibility corporations are more and more collaborating with various institutions. However, the corporations' lack of success to keep their sustainability targets and promises are indicating that top managers and leaders are overwhelmed when integrating a sustainability agenda and the established partnerships into their basic business. Thus, the present study examines why these partnerships demand a different leadership approach that breaks with traditional leadership theory. The study examines how collaborative leadership can make sustainability partnerships more successful. Conducting a case study about the global beauty company Coty, the study offers a framework that highlights important capabilities of collaborative leadership that helps to foster sustainability partnerships. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings conclude the paper.

Keywords: Collaborative leadership, sustainability partnerships, environmental and social responsibility, Coty, leadership

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1. Introduction

Recent developments in political leadership positions, such as the election of Donald Trump have brought a new wave of discussions about sustainability and social responsibility. This is amongst others the reason why there has been a shift in responsibility and leadership from government to the private sector, which has been facing growing expectations to play a larger role according to the 2016 Sustainability Leaders Survey (Globescan & SustainAbility, 2016). However, these future expectations are misaligned with past performances records. Appendix 1 demonstrates that expectations have been increasing for the private sector to play a leading role while their performances have been underwhelming. Leaders today are not performing successfully when executing sustainability agendas. Most businesses are not meeting the promises and targets they have set. Leaders are overwhelmed with the complexity and diversity to integrate a complete sustainability program. Concluding, many businesses have realized that they have to join forces in order to execute their sustainability agenda. ‘Companies need to reach out to others if they want to address sustainability changes, help shape the social context in which they operate and even explore vital new market opportunities’ (Kiron et al., 2015).

1.1. Conducting the Research Question

Sharing knowledge and resources, reinventing the supply chain and breaking internal and external boundaries indicate milestones for many companies. Hence, these collaborations require a strong and committed leadership approach which rejects strictly hierarchical styles and is open to a more collaborative approach that promotes the importance of mutual interest, learning, and consent. A new collaborative approach has to go beyond existing theories and approaches which mainly focus on the relationship between the leader and his followers. These theories largely try to answer questions about motivation, personal development, level of support, and stimulation. Although there is no common definition of leadership, it is mostly conceptualized as ‘(..) a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to

achieve a common goal’ (Northouse, 2010, p. 5). This conceptualization needs to be revolutionized when addressing a sustainability development agenda. The new conceptualization needs to break the boundaries between leaders and followers and provide a more collaborative approach which includes joint leadership, power and resource sharing, as well as delegation of accountabilities. Its focus is not primarily on the individual organization but rather on an inter-organizational context. A collaborative leadership approach has already been established in schools and educational institutions in order to enhance school performance and has resulted in significant improvements (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). A large amount of research supports the view that collaborative leadership, conceptualized as an organizational property, positively impacts growth in student learning through building the academic capacity in schools and build networks among other institutions (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). This positive impact has also been recognized in a business context. ‘A hyperconnected business world demands a leadership style that can harness the power of connections. Leaders need to shed the command-and-control and consensus styles in favor of collaborative leadership’ (Ibarra & Hansen, 2011). Therefore, this paper will outline what collaborative leadership is, what studies have found and why it is important to leaders’ success. Further, this study will focus on sustainability partnerships and seeks to answer the following research question:

How does collaborative leadership make sustainability partnerships more successful?

To answer this question a case study about Coty, a global beauty company that is currently developing a new sustainability growth plan with partnerships among suppliers, customers and shareholders will be conducted. Coty constitutes a unique case since it has established a completely new leadership structure that is less hierarchical with less authority from people at the top. Its new sustainability agenda is built on partnerships and cross-organizational networks which are led by employees at all levels and locations. Overall, this paper adds to and expands

the leadership literature by developing a framework for leaders to build successful sustainability partnerships.

2. Collaborative Leadership

The subsequent section will first give a definition of collaborative leadership as it is currently used in schools and educational institutions, as well as a short demarcation from typical leadership approaches. Second, it will provide a summary of the current state of research.

2.1. Defining Collaborative Leadership

‘Put simply, collaborative leadership is the leadership required to get results across organizational boundaries’ (Archer & Cameron, 2013). This implies that leaders still need to create strategies, build systems and align people, but they have to do it across many different organizational boundaries and in coordination with partners. The challenge of leading and delivering results with others is at the heart of collaborative leadership. Leaders need to focus on a clear governance process. A shared objective has to be embedded in both teams and quality of decision-making processes has to be ensured. Therefore, leaders need to communicate straightforward and roles and accountabilities have to be defined exactly. Furthermore, leaders should ensure that all teams have the same data access but also keep supervision so that no information is abused. Trust is fundamental for collaborations. To meet these challenges, there are three capabilities collaborative leaders must possess. First, building relationships, especially with leaders in other organizations is an essential foundation of collaborative leadership. It is important that building a strong network, as well as sharing values and trust, is prioritized before the need to call others arises (Archer & Cameron, 2013). The collaborative leader forms a team with key partners (in education context for example parents, service providers, or governments). The actions of such networks go beyond any job description and these decision-making environments involve many organizational boundaries (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Second, handling the inevitable conflicts, which means to recognize early signs of conflicts and use

those warnings to uncover hidden differences within the partnership (Archer & Cameron, 2013). Collaborations tend to be highly dynamic in nature with constantly changing constellations, requiring a leader who is highly aware of his surroundings. Third, collaborative leaders need to share control and recognize that one can't achieve his objectives alone. However, it is important to outline that sharing control is very different from empowerment which is part of many other leadership approaches. It is not about giving powers to others so they can function individually, but about knowing where you have to be completely aligned with your partners and being able to act independently outside those points. It is about understanding that one is tied together with long-term overarching concerns (Archer & Cameron, 2013).

2.2. Demarcation from other Leadership Approaches

Most leadership approaches focus on the relationship between leader and followers and the best way to create a successful culture within a single organizational unit. Fiedler's Contingency Theory, for example, focuses mostly on the leader and tries to match a leader's style with the demands of a specific situation. In contrast to this, the Path-Goal Theory was developed to explain how leaders motivate subordinates to be productive and satisfied with their work. Similar to this is the Leader-Member Exchange Theory which addresses leadership as a process centered on the interactions between leaders and followers. Still, one of the most encompassing approaches, the Transformational Leadership, focuses on how leaders are able to inspire followers to accomplish certain goals. Even Hill's team or distributed leadership model does not go beyond the leader-follower relationship since it tries to provide a roadmap to help the leader diagnose team problems and take actions to correct these problems (Northouse, 2010). Summing up, many leaders have been successful by bringing together groups of talented individuals, motivating them to focus on a shared vision and building an organizational environment where their combined talents can thrive (Archer & Cameron, 2013). However, collaborative leadership is not about the leadership skills involved in building a collegiate

culture within an organization. It is about creating an infrastructure in which people and diverse organizations are enabled to participate and where collaboration members share resources, power, and authority. Therefore, the environment in which successful collaborative leaders work is characterized by lasting relationships, high levels of reciprocal investments, trust, mutual commitment, and a strong sense of joint ownership (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995).

2.3. Current State of Research

Research in school and educational environments significantly confirmed the collaborative leadership approach. Mullen and Kochan (2000) were pioneers when they researched the ‘West Alabama Learning Coalition’, an interdependent collective of six uniquely structured Professional Development School partnerships. Based on qualitative interviews, they found that the primary motivation to join this partnership was to improve educational standards. Respondents also viewed membership in the coalition as enhancing their organizational and professional life by creating new and strengthened institutional relationships and skills (Mullen & Kochan, 2000). This organizational network has led to transformational change within the organizations significantly impacting the students’ satisfaction and educational outcomes. Gruenert (2005) used a similar survey methodology to investigate the salience of collaborative cultures relative to student achievement. Data was collected from 81 schools in Indiana. The study demonstrated that a collaborative school culture where teachers work together internally as well as with teachers from other schools is positively correlated with student performance in math and language arts (Gruenert, 2005). Further, the study revealed that the faculty’s awareness of their need to continue learning, as well as that this learning may come from a variety of resources had the strongest correlation with the school performance.

Hallinger and Heck (2010) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the effects of collaborative leadership on school improvement and student reading using 192 elementary schools in the USA over a 4-year period. Longitudinal panel studies found that the transition to

a collaborative leadership approach had a significant direct effect on the school academic capacity which directly affects growth in student learning.

James et al. (2007) found out that schools need to be more flexible, teachers have to work together with other agencies, such as the government or other communities in order to improve school performance. Further, schools need to be led in distributed, non-hierarchical ways due to increasing notions of unpredictability and rapid changes. The way schools and education institutions are changing is very similar to the changes that companies and their top management are facing worldwide. The research about collaborative leadership in schools demonstrates that this new approach can break boundaries and lead to more successful and sustainable collaborations. Further, literature has proven that collaboration is central to partnerships (Hartman, Hofman, & Stafford, 1999).

3. Sustainability Partnerships

In a survey of 3795 executives, 90 percent of respondents agreed that businesses need to collaborate to address the sustainability challenges they face (Kiron et al., 2015). In order to collaborate more strategically and transformational, companies collaborate with diverse organizations ranging from other businesses to governments, and NGOs either within the same industry or even across industries. Companies have to provide financial support, resources, commitment, and time in their collaborations, leading to the fact that those companies that collaborate strategically are up to five times more likely to do the preparation required to ensure successful outcomes (Kiron et al., 2015).

3.1.Key Success Factors

Since sustainability partnerships are only emerging there are no analyses of existing partnerships yet. However, literature exists about the key success factors. This study differentiates two types of success factors which are both key to sustainability partnerships. Hard success factors refer to strategical variables that ensure that the company sustains and

even grows its profitability. Soft success factors refer to more internal prerequisites that need to be established in order to internalize these partnerships in the organization. Hard factors are most appropriately summarized by three 'L's: learning, legal compliance, and leverage. First, dynamic organizational learning and behavior are essential for understanding multiple determinants of environmentally constructive behavior and for traversing and cross-fertilizing levels of analysis (Ryan, 2003). Then, organizations can shift from efficiency to eco-efficiency by increasing process efficiency, eco-efficient product design, and reducing material flow by changing consumer preferences. Second, legal compliance should be established through compliance systems that are suitable for the business and its particular risks and also fully implementable. The attitude of organizations has to shift from being a victim of laws and regulations to being a partner in concurrent compliance (Ryan, 2003). Hence, partnerships should start with a structured analysis and discussion of the deal, with both sides having the willingness to compromise and commit. Third, leverage relies on being influential without being predatory (Ryan, 2003). Organizations that are successfully fostering partnerships gain special rights and responsibilities to consult in multi-party negotiations about sustainable futures. In fact, an early product of such partnerships is marketing and providing consultancy and lobbying services, regarding know-how and contacts (Ryan, 2003).

Soft success factors include amongst others the importance of internal collaborations. When successful, internal collaborations keep people excited, motivated, and aligned. An organizational culture supporting sustainability decisions can inspire and motivate employees to take sustainability obligations serious (Epstein, Buhovac, & Yuthas, 2010), setting the right preconditions for external partnerships. Also, partnerships need to develop a shared language. This is significantly important for partnerships that are not between businesses. To avoid misunderstandings and destructive communications so-called 'boundary spanners', people with the ability to help groups bridge differences in language and culture, should be integrated (Kiron

et al., 2015). Another strategically important aspect is to find the right people. People matter and it is crucial to ensure that every stakeholder is part of the process. Partnerships are ultimately about building relationships which really integrate everyone. Many partnerships fail because their goals are not perfectly aligned or one party is more engaged or integrated than the other. The last crucial soft success factor is board engagement. The support of the board is essential to establish sustainability partnerships as long-term strategic assets that are at the core of the corporation. Further, it is necessary to demonstrate full commitment and the willingness to unfold own knowledge and resources (Kiron et al., 2015).

4. Methodology

In order to answer the proposed research question, a qualitative research approach will be employed. Since this study involves the adoption of collaborative leadership into a new context, a case study is the most appropriate methodology to outline how this leadership approach can help organizations build more successful sustainability partnerships. Case study research involves in-depth analysis of an individual unit, which will be the Coty organization. Therefore, this case study provides an opportunity to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem and may facilitate describing, understanding and explaining the research problem (Baskarada, 2014). This case study follows the six interdependent stages that Yin (2009) describes. First, the planning stage contains identifying the research question and the rationale for doing a case study which has been outlined in the previous section. Section 2 will outline the underlying theoretical concepts as well as identify important determinants and variables for the case study. The next stage is the preparation of the case study investigator which contains many different components. Questionnaire and observation protocols have been constructed and a data collection plan has been developed. As outlined before, this case study represents more a theoretical sampling, since the goal is not to representatively capture all possible variations but to gain a deeper understanding of the case (Baskarada, 2014). Generally, in the context of case

studies data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions (Baskarada, 2014). During and after observations or interviews the researcher evaluates the meaning of the collected information in terms of what it may imply. All transcripts and data will be coded through a classical content analysis, which is similar to a constant comparison analysis. The last stage is the development of a framework based on the collaborative leadership approach and the collected evidence, to help leaders make sustainability partnerships more successful.

The following table shows all data collected:

Primary Data	
Interviews	Anna Lucuk - Vice President of Global Corporate Responsibility
	Nathalie Perroquin - Vice President of Global Sustainability
	Jess McGhie - Corporate Affairs Manager
	Guillaume Tardy - CEO Luxury Division Germany, Austria, Swiss
	Britta Meys - Corporate Manager Germany, Austria, Swiss
	Angela Lauf - Vice President Corporate Affairs and Global Projects
Observations	Coty Germany Luxury Conference Frankfurt (4.-6.10.)
	Corporate Affairs Team Teleconferences (26.10. & 11.11)
Secondary Data	
Coty Internal Documents	
Coty Statistics	
Coty Employee Survey	
Web Information	

5. Case Study Coty

The following analysis of case study data will be structured as follows: After a short introduction of Coty as a global beauty company which aims to be a challenger in the industry, its internal sustainability management, containing internal communication and collaboration will be outlined. Lastly, the execution of Coty's sustainability agenda will be analyzed with the main focus on the processes, decision-making, and evaluation of Coty's sustainability partnerships.

5.1. Coty – A Challenger in Beauty

Coty is a global beauty company with about nine billion dollars net revenue in 2016 and more than 20.000 employees all around the world. Coty has a large and diverse portfolio of more than 77 brands, making it the global market leader in fragrances. Although Francois Coty founded Coty in 1904, Coty was reinvented last year by the merger with Procter & Gamble's Specialty Beauty. This transformed Coty to one of the world's largest beauty companies. Therefore, Coty was able to rethink its sustainability agenda and is currently establishing a revolutionary growth plan. According to Tardy, CEO of the luxury division in Germany, beauty really has the power to change the world, it gives people confidence and this is what makes this case very unique. The world of beauty is still an industry that produces a lot of waste, so Tardy is sure that there are many 'low-hanging fruits' for Coty in terms of sustainability. An interview with Anna Lucuk, Vice President of Global Corporate Responsibility, gave more insights what this responsible growth plan contains. Through surveys across the company, Coty identified a list of 22 environmental, social, and governance issues framed into six categories. The map (Appendix 2) identifies areas of overlap between business success and importance to a wider scope of stakeholders. There are two main focuses of the Corporate Responsibility Agenda: one is the social cause referring to fighting prejudices, racism and inequality caused by gender, ethnicity or race. The other one is the environmental side of sustainability including Coty's footprint and environmental matrix. Coty sees great opportunities in the specific area of circular design of ingredients and products, where it really can challenge the industry and take the lead. Coty plans to approach this challenge through sustainable innovation that will be developed through strategic internal and external collaborations.

5.2. Coty's Internal Sustainability Management

The Corporate Affairs department is located across the world with around 24 team members. Currently, there are four people working on the further development of Coty's new responsible

growth plan, two of them focusing on the environmental side of sustainability and the other two focusing on the social side. Therefore, the Corporate Affairs team works across all divisions and functions. According to Lucuk, the team has weekly meetings by telepresence, but they also share text messages and phone calls nearly on a daily basis. Asking about their role as leaders and their time management, statements from Lucuk and Perroquin, Vice President of Sustainability, were very similar. Both interpret their leader role mainly as facilitators who open up discussions and raise awareness for sustainability topics as both see their team as experts with their own specialization. Tardy explained that he doesn't believe in top-down leadership. He wants to work collaboratively with his employees and empower them to bring in the best they can. He also stated that this type of leadership doesn't need much time or budget, it should be performed every day and doesn't need for instance big gatherings. Lucuk stated that currently more than 80 percent of her time is spent with internal communication on change and crisis management. She tries to explain to employees stakeholders' and licensors' expectation. Due to the merger, all sustainability actions are currently centralized and execution of the new strategy is behind schedule. Observation of two team teleconferences confirmed this statement. The most important topics discussed were about merger and change management. Only a small amount of time was dedicated to important initiatives for Coty such as the Global Citizen program and even less was dedicated to the further execution of the new responsible growth plan. This misalignment became extremely obvious when talking to Britta Meys, the Corporate Affairs Manager of Germany, Austria, Switzerland. Meys' main accountabilities at the moment are dedicated to the merger management in those three countries. Mostly in Germany, where all three divisions are moving to a new headquarter and many internal staff modifications are conducted, Meys barely has time to fulfill her role as an advocate for sustainability. According to Lucuk, the most urgent issues take precedence and very little is delegated down from Lucuk's and Perroquin's team in London and Paris. Lucuk is developing an engagement plan that is

supposed to inspire employees through innovative challenges since she believes that everything that is said about sustainability has to be linked to growth, but this has not yet been fully embedded in the company. Observation and short interviews with employees during the three-day conference of the DACH division (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) also highlighted that there is little awareness about Coty's sustainability initiatives. Employees also stated that there is barely any information in Coty's intranet or newsletters that give information about its sustainability management. Further research on Coty's database confirmed these statements. Only short articles can be found about the Corporate Affairs function and its programs. Employees also explained that they thoroughly are interested in various sustainability actions but feel that they don't have the time. Only a few of them are part of the Coty CSR Ambassadorship Network which unites purpose driven colleagues who have a passion for bringing sustainable change. Every year ambassadors participate in special events contributing to several sustainable development goals. Furthermore, at the conference, there was very little information communicated by the executives, talking only very briefly about Coty's environmental and social responsibility. Tardy, however, said that the executive board is very clear about sustainability being on top of the agenda for the next years. Further, he explained that this shouldn't be top down, but the board has to make room in peoples' work plans and priorities. Summing up, the analysis is indicating that the Coty's Corporate Affairs function is characterized by strong centralization of accountabilities and is aiming for further employee engagement. The global team is planning to integrate its function more into the business and strives for further board narrative and activism.

5.3. Coty's Sustainability Partnerships

In order to understand and outline Coty's Sustainability Partnerships, expert interviews have been conducted as well as second and third order documents analyzed. The first interview with Jess McGhie, Corporate Affairs Manager and Leader of the Global Citizen program, gave many

insights how Coty wants to fulfill its social cause. McGhie explained that an employee survey was conducted showing that many employees want to support women rights and fight prejudices of any kind. Since this is new territory for Coty, McGhie and her team decided to reach out to Global Citizen, an organization that has a lot of expertise and understands Coty's needs. According to McGhie, key factors to choose Global Citizen have been their reputation, activism, convenient power, their collaboration with celebrities, expertise and digital orientation. Then, an agency was hired to establish first contact points between the two organizations and is still responsible for fostering the relationship. Meanwhile, there are meetings once a week since the launch of the program is in January 2018. However, there is no fixed team working on this project. McGhie is solely responsible and she brings in relevant people for example from the IT department when needed. Currently, Global Citizen is developing a tailored platform which will be internally available to Coty employees. When asking about processes, McGhie stated that Coty takes Global Citizen's direction in terms of policy, IT and legal advice. However, when determining what campaign to launch, McGhie is discussing and deciding with the board of executives meaning that Coty sets the agenda and Global Citizen helps Coty to execute it in a more efficient and legal way. When talking more specifically about leadership, McGhie explained that she is continuously in correspondence with employees from various departments getting advice and expertise. Contrary to Lucuk and Perroquin, she describes her role different to a 'facilitator', since she is the manager of the whole Global Citizen program. Her accountability is bringing together Coty's conceptions of its social cause with the scope and agenda of Global Citizen. Therefore, she is in charge of launching the program and executing the campaign. According to her, getting peoples' time from other department is tough and she urgently needs to engage more people in next few months but currently, she is only collaborating with other departments when needing information on a specific topic.

To find out more about the environmental aspect of Coty's sustainability agenda, Nathalie Perroquin has been interviewed who was in charge of many partnerships with Coty's licensors. She is also responsible for all activities that refer to decreasing Coty's footprint and tracking its sustainability development. Therefore, she looks at every step of the value chain and tries to identify the impact on social and environmental aspects. A new tool called Credit 360 has been deployed to all sights and collects big data from all points of the value chain. Therefore, Coty collaborated with 'EHS Sustainability' to incorporate this platform to Coty's business processes. According to Perroquin, it was essential to identify and prioritize projects and also understand stakeholders' expectations. This led Perroquin and her team to the conclusion that circular economy is Coty's biggest chance to lead the industry in terms of sustainability. Furthermore, Perroquin stresses several times that to her partnerships are key and that Coty needs to join forces. Therefore, Coty is part of the so-called *Responsible Beauty Initiative*, in which 5 leading companies, Clarins, Coty, Groupe Rocher, L'Oréal, and Eco Vadis try to standardize and improve the ethical, social and ecological performance of the industry. This initiative is based on a corporate social responsibility tool developed by Eco Vadis, global leader in sustainability ratings. All suppliers from each organization register in this. Then Eco Vadis evaluates and analyses this data and shares the results collaboratively online. The Membership Committee, consisting of one representative from each company, meets monthly to discuss and work on future actions. Eco Vadis facilitates these meetings and is also responsible for confidentiality and anti-trust guidelines. Nathalie Perroquin, Coty's representative, evaluates this as a unique opportunity to catch up the train with L'Oréal who already has been very active in sustainability activities. Perroquin works closely together with the supply chain department to continuously discuss and reevaluate supply chain activities. In the near future this tool shall also help to trigger more sustainable innovation and redesigning the supply chain. Also, Coty joined the *Responsible Mica Initiative*. Mica can be found in a large variety of consumer goods and

industry materials and it is highly connected to child labor and inhumane working conditions in India. Perroquin explains that there was a choice to make: either Coty doesn't source from these factories in India and leave them in poverty or Coty contributes to find a solution collaboratively with the industry. Accordingly, Coty is now collaborating to improve the source traceability, education of children and compliance to human rights. Governed by the General Assembly, which contains all active members who contribute to the funding. They elect the Board of Directors as well as the Advisory Board which is advising and assessing the progress of the Board of Directors. The Executive Team who is then in charge of daily business are three people who are mandated by the Board of Directors. By now, Coty has no leading position but is actively participating in the meetings of the initiative and contributing to the funding.

As mentioned earlier, Perroquin is also responsible for many partnerships with Coty's licensors. She embodies the interface function that explains to licensors how Coty can contribute to achieving their own brand engagement. In many cases, when brands have high sustainability commitments, Coty has to align these commitments with its own capabilities. Adidas is the best case to demonstrate this interplay. Adidas committed that they will eliminate plastic in all products by 2030 which has significant implications for Coty as well. Perroquin and her team need to develop an action plan how they fulfill this commitment in all Adidas beauty products. Therefore, meetings have been set up to develop the new Adidas beauty line taking into account these new principles. Perroquin not only met with Adidas but also with Parley, an organization with the aim to protect the ocean, who also has a partnership with Adidas to find an exit plan and grow faster on eco-conception. However, since Coty owns the license of Adidas' whole beauty division, Coty has the accountability to fulfill these commitments and this is where Perroquin indicates difficulties in partnerships. Since each counterpart of the partnership has its own reasons and mission, she often faces problems with aligning the objectives. Further, she explained, it is difficult to stick to a roadmap that Coty has defined since there is a dependence

on the other part's progression. The fact that Coty is not always setting the tone alone constitutes difficulties for the Corporate Affairs team since they need to report to the board and they need to comply with targets and deadlines. Moreover, Coty is part of the United Nation Compact in which they also need to report and continuously communicate its strategy and achievements. These reasons lead currently to a difficult relationship with Adidas since Coty is not executing the plastic exit strategy fast enough. Adidas as the stronger counterpart in this relationship is pushing Coty to accelerate, leading to harsher negotiations and communication. When explaining these difficulties Perroquin further described that she sees her role mainly as a facilitator who is connecting the dots and is trying to give ideas on how to grow faster in sustainability aspects but she stressed that she is not in charge of the relationship of the license. Marketing and Product Development own these accountabilities. Perroquin describes her leadership approach as more inspirational and visionary, defending a vision where success relies on ethical, social development and creative use and respect of natural resources.

5.4. Findings

After analyzing all data, the following key findings can be extracted and linked to the underlying literature. The analysis has shown that Coty has strategically decided to put partnerships on the top of their sustainability agenda, with the dedication to share internal data and resources. Tardy is sure, that embedding sustainable actions is not an additional cost, but can improve Coty's cost savings, especially in terms of packaging and waste. Further, due to the licensing business, Coty has already many strategic partners which makes this case even more interesting. The example of Adidas demonstrates that Coty has the obligation to fulfill very different sustainability targets which puts them under pressure. The analysis has shown that Coty has embedded a more collaborative approach of leadership to manage and grow its sustainability agenda which is characterized by the following aspects: Coty has established and integrated the Corporate Affairs function with Perroquin and Lucuk at the top as an institution

with clear authority and freedom in all planning and decision making processes. Further, the Corporate Affairs team is located all around the world and deeply connected with all different departments. They highly benefit from employee engagement at all levels and locations (see Appendix 3). This unique organizational structure makes it easier for Coty to join forces with other businesses in the industry or other institutions, since the team is dispersed and open to cross-organizational networks. All leaders interviewed, including Tardy, understand their employees as experts with specific expertise who are valuable for the management of sustainability partnerships. They try to organize their teams 'bottom-up' with the basis of all planning being the employees. This was proven amongst others by Coty conducting surveys across the company to establish its sustainability agenda. Every initiative or partnership they are joining is not only led by the Corporate Affairs function but from the employees from different department. Coty's leaders have understood that they need the expertise and engagement from various employees to manage these partnerships. The same accounts for Coty's partners. Coty is allocating clear tasks among its own team and its partners. Global citizen, for instance, has been chosen because of its expertise and reputation. They take on all administrative tasks as well as setting up the right infrastructure, whereas Coty is developing the right marketing strategy. Therefore, Coty has clarified where they need support and in which areas they can go alone. Lastly, Coty is one of the few who is building the bridge between being sustainable and driving the business. By connecting sustainable actions and innovation, Coty plans to challenge the industry and motivate and engage its employees. On the other hand, the analysis has also shown that Coty has to overcome several obstacles such as the merger management, as well as employee and board engagement. To strengthen its collaborative approach Coty will need a clear dedication from the board, which has to make room for employees to participate even more in the new growth plan. Tardy also mentioned, that in terms of partnerships it is important to keep authenticity and not collaborate with everyone, as well

as not promising too many things that are unachievable in the end. This will be a leadership challenge that has to be solved collaboratively with the Corporate Affairs function, the executive board, and managers from all various departments and locations.

6. Collaborative Leadership Framework for Sustainability Partnerships

The case study has shown that nowadays top-level leaders have to manage many relationships simultaneously with every partnership having its own dynamics and challenges. The following model has been derived from the findings of the case study. It shows the most important and specific aspects of Coty's sustainability partnerships and the approach to manage them. It highlights Coty's relations to its partners as well as the key resources, activities, and costs that its leaders are investing and performing. The results prove that Coty manages its sustainability plan bottom-up by setting the agenda through employee surveys and is managing its partnerships with the engagement from various departments. 'Compact' and 'deliverables' show how Coty's leaders are coordinating and enforcing the partnerships and how they ensure the achievement of targets. Lastly, 'desired assets' demonstrate which criteria Coty uses to find the optimal partner. 'Usable forms' are the different regulations leaders are using to secure Coty's business and internal information, as well as formal contracts that Coty uses to challenge itself. The analysis shows that Coty is trying to embed a more collaborative leadership approach to manage its sustainability partnerships. Coty complies with many collaborative leadership characteristics such as sharing internal data, including employees communicating honest and clear about objectives and motives. Simultaneously, Coty understands and internalizes objectives from the other party which goes beyond a bland statement like 'delivering value together' (Archer & Cameron, 2013). All these aspects help Coty to establish and foster strategically important partnerships for its business. The collaborative leadership approach helps to trigger the key success factors of sustainability partnerships. The framework shows the specific tools used by Coty to make them more successful.

Partnership Relation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategic long-term alliances, that Coty realizes as learning opportunities - high degree of collaboration but no total loyalty - partnership is embedded throughout Coty 	Key Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employee survey to identify key interests - understand licencors' targets - understand and integrate stakeholders' expectation - create one shared target - steady communication with partner & all Coty functions - bring together people from both sides 	Compact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear identification of roles and accountabilites (e.g. Global Citizen) - understand the teams as one unit, be the leader of both sides - offer resources that are necessary 	Desired Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - look strategically for partners with expertise and contacts in the area of sustaniability (Global Citizen) - collaborate with competitors to exploit learning opportunities - benefit from licencors activities and sustaniability plans - join big initiatives within the industry to prove market leader position and challenge the industry
Key Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all Coty deparments (R&D, Finance, Supply Chain, HR, Growth & Digital, IT, Legal) - internal data - money - board engagement - work force - expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish trust - hire agency as intermediary when necessary - act as an intermediary and facilitator between licencors and Coty functions - manage partnerships bottom-up 	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish measuring points (EcoVadis) - keep an eye on the team's achievement , not only on Coty - set targer / embed licencors' deadlines (adidas 2030 goal) - understand sustainability partnerships as part of the main business not as a social cause 	
Cost Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by now no heavy investments in terms of money - the Corporate Affairs needs to be enlarged (headcounts) - Coty is planning to invest heavier in the next years, introducing more measuring tools like EcoVadis 	Usable Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - importance of clear regulations (anti-trust guidelines) - sign contracts that prevend abuse right from the start - challenge Coty by signing UN Global Compact 		

The collaborative leadership approach challenges leaders from each side to build strong relationships and networks that are built on trust and shared objectives. A selected team needs to be integrated into this network and leaders need to bring everyone together when decisions really matter. In comparison, to other decision-making processes, this framework challenges the leader not to take the stand-alone when things become tough. Avoiding the dialogue with partners is highly harmful. Further, it became evident that all parties need to work with the same data, hence each organization needs to share internal information. Leaders not only have to guarantee data access for all parties but also create trust and keep supervision that no information is abused. As the case study has proved this is a rather complex capability since the line between oversharing and secrecy is often blurred. Connected to this is also one of the main capabilities of collaborative leadership: control sharing. This goes beyond ‘giving ideas’ and

‘bringing together’ as Coty’s leaders mainly explained. It’s not sufficient to divide responsibilities and make decisions on other topics independently, it’s about accepting that one is tied together. Still, there are some aspects that Coty needs to improve in order to perform a pure collaborative approach. One key determinant that Coty has to improve is effective communication. Different to other leadership approaches, the collaborative leader needs to communicate very shortly, neutral and rational. Communicating bad news is as important as good news and all communication needs to be straightforward instead of self-congratulatory (Archer & Cameron, 2013). When problems arise, leaders need to know the technique to examine what both parties have contributed which allows people to stop judging each other. As important as this is to strengthen internal teams and employee engagement. In order to do all this the framework challenges leaders to rethink their time management. Leaders will need to organize themselves better to neither neglect their internal obligation nor the management of partnerships.

This framework will challenge today’s leaders to scrutinize their own leadership style and it will pose a challenge for them to think and act beyond existing boundaries they are operating in.

7. Discussion

This paper examined *how* the collaborative leadership approach can be used by leaders to make sustainability partnerships more successful. Therefore, the case study has been used to identify weak points and difficulties that have to be solved by leaders. The findings suggest that a typical leadership approach used in a normal business context is not sufficient to lead sustainability partnerships successfully. The demonstration of Coty’s partnerships proved that leaders have to think and act beyond organizational boundaries to lead these partnerships efficiently and further to integrate them into the business and organizational structure. The resulting framework based on the literature of educational partnerships (Archer & Cameron, 2013; Ogawa & Bossert,

1995) gives leaders a tool to fulfill the key success factors of sustainability partnerships and to solve key difficulties within these partnerships. This study reinforces the idea that organizations need to open their boundaries to meet the environmental and social challenges our world is facing. Literature has already shown that the private sector is more and more required to take the lead and the sector needs to open up and empower its leaders to use this framework and make them free of traditional leadership approaches. Organizations can effectively promote this framework by the strong support of the board and full commitment to partnerships meaning these partnerships have to be embedded in the business and in all future developments if the organizations. Also, leaders need to have the freedom to organize their time according to the framework and to lead the team as one collaborative unity.

7.1.Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the new framework for leaders, this research is not without limitations. First, limitation concerns the moment in time Coty has been analyzed. As mentioned, Coty has just finished the transition time after the merger is establishing a new sustainability agenda containing new partnerships and structures. Therefore, issues have been identified that are related to the merger and many partnerships are still in the early stages. Although the framework is based on the literature, supported by empirical research and matched with the key findings of the study, it has to be considered that the basis of this framework was successful in school and educational environments. As outlined, businesses will need a real shift in restructuring their partnerships and internal leadership structures to follow this framework. Therefore, further research should focus on testing this framework within the business environment conducting further case studies in other industries. Also, interviews with various leaders will help to understand what kind of resources or training leaders need to execute this leadership approach in specific industries or specific organizations.

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